

# The Bulletin

Number 15, Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015

## Professional Development for 2015

Download fliers for the SVRC PD programs from the SVRC website.

Event	Date
<b>Term 4 Dot Power:</b> for beginning braille readers	Tuesday 17 November
<b>Support Skills Try Day</b>	Friday 20 November
<b>SVRC Expo from 10am to 2pm:</b> Access Technology for Students with Vision Impairments – all welcome!	Monday 23 November
<b>SVRC Christmas Morning Tea</b> – all welcome – no need to register!	Wednesday 2 December

## Books for 2016 in Alternative Format

Thanks to everyone for giving us information about student subjects and text requirements for next year. Please remember to get your book lists in to us as soon as possible for the production staff!

## SVRC Technology Library

The library of access technology established at the Statewide Vision Resource Centre through the 2012-3 More Support for Students with Disabilities National Partnership funding has offered Victorian students in government schools unprecedented access to the latest technology. Equipment Grant funding in 2014-5 has made possible the purchase of additional equipment to add to the collection.

Over 1,000 items of equipment are currently on loan to students throughout the state, improving access to the curriculum and supporting student inclusion.

**We are asking everyone to check that the equipment is still being used by students. If not, please return the equipment to the SVRC so that it can be assigned to another student.**

We have a number of requests for equipment, particularly for electronic magnification units, so rather than any unused equipment gathering dust in schools, please return so we can pass it on.

We thank the Visiting Teachers for their support of this program and for the ongoing provision of training for students and staff in schools!

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## Vision Matters!

Vision Matters is a new segment that will be a feature of upcoming editions of The Bulletin. As the name suggests, Vision Matters will offer information about a particular vision impairment, a vision-related issue or vision-related research. The first in the series is about eye patching.

### ***Vision Matters – ‘Patching’***

By Marion Blazé

Patching has long been used as a treatment for a ‘lazy eye’ or amblyopia. Amblyopia can occur when one eye is stronger than the other, and the brain ‘turns off’ vision to the poorer eye to prevent receiving different visual input from each eye. Children are often treated by patching the good eye, in order to get the amblyopic eye working harder.



As VTs, we can sometimes be asked by schools what can be done to help a child being patched. As you can imagine, if their better eye is covered, they can be quite ‘impaired’ for a time. Such children are not considered eligible for support because their condition is temporary. Teachers can check with parents about the length of time the eye should be patched. It is often for a few hours every day.

The best advice we can give schools is to persevere and not to make things ‘easy’. For example, if we were to suggest that the child use large print or not do any visual tasks while patched, we would be defeating the purpose of the treatment, which is in fact to get that ‘lazy’ eye working harder!

We have sometimes seen cases of bilateral amblyopia. Both eyes can become ‘lazy’ when there has been a refractive error which has not been corrected with glasses. The cases we have seen have generally been refugee children who have not worn glasses until they have come to Australia in their teens.

## **Review of Program for Students with Disabilities**

The Department of Education and Training invites members of the Victorian community to comment on support for students with disabilities and additional learning needs. Contributions can be made by:

1. completing the anonymous online survey which closes at 5pm on 16 October – find out more: [www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/needs/Pages/psdreview.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/needs/Pages/psdreview.aspx)
2. emailing your recommendations to [psd.review@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:psd.review@edumail.vic.gov.au)

Feedback is sought from parents, carers, teachers, principals, specialist and support staff and community members.

## **Register Your Interest for Space Camp 2016**

We are compiling the names of DET **STUDENTS & STAFF** who are interested in participating in or supporting **Space Camp 2016**. For students and families, this will mean quite a bit of networking and fundraising. For staff, this will mean quite a bit of paperwork. Please register your interest by email to SVRC. For information about Space Camp visit the SVRC website.

## Dot Power: Term 3

Report from Lea Nagel

Nine children aged from 5 to 8 years old attended term 3's Dot Power Day. Our main aim for Dot Power Day is to develop skills in braille and tactual graphics. Dot Power Day is extremely valuable because the whole learning group is collaboratively immersed in a braille-rich environment. Today's Dot Power theme was from the Expanded Core Curriculum area of Daily Living Skills. We used a recipe to focus on braille reading and compared real vegetables with their tactual images and braille labels. The children also enjoyed the opportunity to hear and touch some new musical instruments. They also read and played some simple rhythms in braille music, and played a card game.

The Dot Power theme song was played today on the piccolo. Children touched and investigated the piccolo and the euphonium. They learned the "Yum Yuck Yum" song which introduced them to the vocabulary that they would find in the recipe for pasties.

The children then read the recipe for pasties, finding contractions on the page and the details in the illustrations, then practising reading with flowing, light fingers. They compared the illustrations in the recipe book with real pasties ingredients, exploring the two-dimensional images and the braille words. They collected the ingredients that they had chosen to add to their pasties and took them to the food processors to be grated – with close supervision from an adult! They assembled their pasties ready to be cooked.

While the pasties were being cooked, two young musicians from MLC played and demonstrated the violin and guitar. The children were able to touch both instruments and learn about different ways each can be played. The children then read some simple rhythms in braille music: crotchets, minims, and quavers on notes C, E and G and crotchet rests. All of the children were able to read from their rhythm sheets after a very short introduction to the task! They were presented with a sheet of tactual notes and the rhythms in print and braille and were encouraged to show these to their music teachers at school to demonstrate how easily braille music could be included in music classes. Further information on braille music can be found on the SVRC website.

After eating their pasties for lunch, the children revised their braille and tactual image vocabulary through a game of Go Fish. The cards were copies of the illustrations and braille label from the recipe book. While the children were enjoying the game, they were also learning about organising and remembering their cards and following the rules and conventions of card games.

The children went home with a set of the materials that were used during the day, and are encouraged to share the recipe book with their families (re-reading!!) and to perhaps make dinner for the family, and to play Go Fish with their set of cards.

As can be seen from the photos (right), Dakota went straight home and cooked up a storm – and if Facebook is to be believed, she posted a pastie to a family in Ballarat!!!



## Seven students celebrated the Reading Hour with SVRC in 2015!

From Marion Blazé, SVRC

Driven by Australian libraries, The Reading Hour raises the status and visibility of reading and literacy nationwide.

**This year SVRC wanted to promote reading in alternative formats!!** And I'm thrilled to report that we had seven students participate by reading in their preferred medium or media!

The following students received certificates in Large Print and Braille:  
Ben, Bodhi, Jessica, Maddison, Will, Zac and Zeynep.

Well done to all. These students read in combinations of Braille, Audio, eText and NVDA formats.

Ben is our champion Reading Hour participant having read a total of 34 books in all of the above formats. Fantastic work, Ben!! And many thanks to Jeni, his VT, for registering his efforts.

We hope to see even more participants in 2016!

### *From VT, Jeni Blake:*

It was a great exercise for the kids! They really enjoyed the reading in the different formats – it gave them the chance to think outside the square.

It was great to get the families involved as well. It is also good to expose them to some classics which every school does – the kids loved the stories!

## Five Fabulous Things Siri Can Do

From Christine Casey

1. Provide dictionary definitions: Ask Siri to “define” a word, and it will speak a definition.  
For example: “Define surprise”.
2. Locate and read Wikipedia articles: Ask Siri to read a Wikipedia article about something and it will do so.  
For example: “Read me a Wikipedia article about Geelong”.
3. Perform calculations: Siri can act as a calculator.  
For example: “5 plus 29”.
4. Provide geographic information: when asked, Siri is able to announce capital cities and calculate the distance between cities.  
For example: “What is the capital of Victoria?” or “How far is it from Melbourne to Sydney?”
5. Provide local time and weather information: Siri is able to provide information such as weather forecast, current temperature and time for cities on request.  
For example: “What is the time in Wellington?” or “What is the weather like in Brisbane?”

## **VA's Career Start Graduate Program**

From: Melissa Curulli, Employee Relations Business Partner, Vision Australia

Vision Australia is currently recruiting for the Career Start Graduate Program, commencing in February 2016. Applications are now open if you or someone you know is interested in employment opportunities.

To be eligible to apply for our 2016 Career Start Graduate Program, Graduates must:

- Either be blind or have low vision;
- Have completed a tertiary qualification within the past four years.

The 12 month program is designed for Graduates with a clinical qualification (occupational therapy, speech pathology, physiotherapy, etc.) or business orientated qualifications (such as information services, commerce, finance etc).

The program provides Graduates with:

- 9 month rotation in their area of study;
- 3 month rotation within a diverse area of the organisation;
- Support in finding employment at the end of the program;
- Valuable training and work experience;
- Fantastic networking opportunities.

To find out more please contact Vision Australia.

## **Quantum RLV: New Victorian Office**

Source: LiveWire Low Vision, Issue 37, Spring 2015

Quantum has a new Victorian showroom and office where you can try out a range of their products. You'll find them at:

5 Keith Street, Hampton East 3188  
 PO Box 24, Southland Ctr, Cheltenham 3129  
 Tel: (03) 9545 4100

## **Considering a Career as an Orientation & Mobility Specialist?**

Source: Nicola Misso, Vision Australia

Orientation and Mobility Specialists work with people of all ages, who are blind or have low vision to achieve their mobility goals by developing skills and abilities to travel safely and confidently through a range of environments.

Applications are now open for enrolments in the 2016 Graduate Diploma of Orientation and Mobility 10311NAT delivered via Vision Australia Registered Training Organisation.

This nationally recognised and accredited training leads to qualification as an Orientation and Mobility Specialist. The course will be delivered 3 days a week over a 20 month period, based in Kensington, Melbourne.

For further information visit the Vision Australia website where you can download the course flier, handbook and fee & charges schedule, or contact the Course Coordinator, on (03) 9381 6425.

## Australasian Orientation & Mobility Conference

**When:** November 13 – 14, 2015

**Where:** Bayview on the Park, 52 Queens Road, Melbourne

Independent Options for Mobility and the Orientation & Mobility Association of Australasia (OMAA) are excited to announce that the 5th Australasian Orientation & Mobility (AOMC) Conference will be taking place in Melbourne over 2 days in November 2015.

The conference will present highlights from the International Mobility Conference (IMC) 15, held in Montreal, Canada in July 2015. This will be an opportunity to engage with your colleagues in the field of O&M, and we encourage O&M Specialists, team leaders and other interested allied health professionals to attend.

### Costs

OMAA members are eligible for a reduced registration fee.

### Program

The conference will primarily consist of plenary (not concurrent) sessions. Presentation topics include:

- All brains but no brawn: Creating a strong model for support groups and case meetings.
- Developing effective collaboration between O&M Specialists, Visiting Teachers, Parents, and Schools.
- Applying a developmental approach to O&M intervention with very young children.

Please visit [www.omaaustralasia.com](http://www.omaaustralasia.com) for further information.

## Newer Technologies: GeorgiePhone

Source: [www.georgiephone.com/](http://www.georgiephone.com/)

GeorgiePhone is a family of Android apps for people who are blind or have low vision people and people looking for a simple, no nonsense phone. With big talking buttons, clear print, simple layout and choice of colour themes, the apps are designed with the following users in mind:

- people who are blind or have low vision
- people who can't see or read and need talking software
- people who can't manage small buttons and words on a cluttered screen
- people nervous of phones: a friend or carer can manage everything remotely
- seniors and older people
- people with other special needs and disabilities

GeorgiePhone apps include:

- Georgie Weather: gives you a forecast for the next few days anywhere in the world (free)
- Georgie Camera: take photographs and voice label each image for easy recall
- Georgie Colour Detection
- Georgie Directions: spoken or on-screen directions
- Georgie OCR: scan print and listen or see in large print
- More

GeorgiePhone has been developed in the UK.

## NDIS Rollout in Victoria

Source: [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au) and information provided by Children with Disability Australia

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is being introduced throughout Australia in stages. In Victoria, the NDIS will be rolled out across the state. People currently receiving support through the Victorian Government will move to the NDIS at different times depending on where they live and the type of support they receive.

The first stage of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Victoria began in the Barwon region on 1 July 2013.

From 1 July 2016 the NDIS will begin to be available across other areas of Victoria. The NDIS will be made available progressively across the state over the next three years as follows:

In the first year, three areas will transition to the NDIS. These include:

- North Eastern Melbourne from 1 July 2016;
- Central Highlands from 1 January 2017; and
- Loddon from 1 May 2017.

In the second year, seven areas will transition to the NDIS. These include:

- Inner Gippsland from 1 October 2017;
- Ovens Murray from 1 October 2017;
- Western District from 1 October 2017;
- Inner East Melbourne from 1 November 2017;
- Outer East Melbourne 1 November 2017;
- Hume Moreland from 1 March 2018; and
- Bayside Peninsula from 1 April 2018.

In the third year, six areas will transition to the NDIS. These include:

- Southern Melbourne from 1 September 2018;
- Brimbank Melton from 1 October 2018;
- Western Melbourne from 1 October 2018;
- Goulburn from 1 January 2019;
- Mallee from 1 January 2019; and
- Outer Gippsland from 1 January 2019.

The specific details on when and how people will be able to access the NDIS will be made available in the coming months.

It is expected to take up to 12 months for eligible people with disability to enter the NDIS once roll out starts in an area.

For more information, please contact the National Disability Insurance Agency on 1800 800 110.

## SPEVI Conference 2017

You are invited to save the date!

**When:** 9-13 January 2017

**Where:** Brisbane

**Theme:** Shining the light on vision education

## What's Important to YOUth Forum: Creating Better Youth Policy for All

The Youth Disability Advocacy Service invites young people with a disability to attend a forum:

**When:** Saturday 17 October 2015

**Time:** 11.15am to 3.30pm

**Where:** Melbourne CBD, very close to public transport

**Who:** People aged 12 to 24 years old and identify as a person with disabilities

The Victorian government is developing a new youth policy and we would like to hear from you! Have your say about:

- Government policies and programs
- New ways for government to work with young people
- Action the government can take to improve the lives of young people
- Making the move easier between finishing school and finding work

Lunch, transport assistance and support provided!

For more information and information about applying to attend, please contact: Sarah Forbes on (03) 9267 3733, SMS to 0411 073 538.

## Taking and Labelling Photos with VoiceOver on Your iDevice

Information provided by Phia Damsma, Sonokids Australia and webmaster for SPEVI

### *Taking Photos*

Apple has made the camera app on iPhone accessible with VoiceOver. VoiceOver will indicate the settings of the camera app, and enable you to select the front facing camera for a selfie shot. It will then indicate whether your face is centred, or where it is located ("face close to bottom edge"), "large face" when it is a close-up, and "no face" as soon as your face is not completely in the frame anymore.

### *Labelling Photos*

Here is a nifty tip about labelling which was posted online by Ezekiel Zeke Johnson, a member of the 'iPhone and iPad Apps for the Blind And Visually Impaired Facebook Group'.

1. With VoiceOver on, go to a picture in your camera roll. Make sure that you hear the photo label as is, for example: "Time and date of the picture."
2. Tap your picture with two fingers and hold it. Wait to hear 3 beep tones then release your fingers.
3. VoiceOver will say: "Alert, label element, editing texting...". Now you are able to type a description of that picture, and press Save.
4. Now when you go to that picture, and press it, it will speak out the label that you typed.

## AFB Accessible Video Player

Source: [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org)

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) offers an accessible video player as a free download.

Crista Earl, director of AFB Web Services notes, "Other video players have buttons with unlabelled images, so people using screen readers and people with low vision can't easily fast forward, pause or rewind the video."

The AFB Accessible Player leverages HTML 5 and cascading style sheets (CSS) to allow low-vision users to take advantage of websites' high-contrast colour schemes to select the font sizes and colours they find easiest to read. The controls are labelled with text, so they work with any kind of assistive technology, such as screen-reading software, braille displays and screen-magnification software, as well as a mouse. The video can be expanded to full screen, which is helpful for users with low vision. It can be used either as an embedded YouTube player or as a standard player, and the custom control layout supports both English and Spanish languages. The player also provides fallback options for older browsers. HTML5 is the standard supported by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), which provides enhanced functionality for modern websites and helps make the internet more accessible.

## Braille Embossers and Braille Translation Software

Source: Audio Braille Update, Edition 3 2015

The next major version of the Duxbury Braille Translation, (DBT) software was released in July. DBT 11.3 and can be downloaded from: [www.duxburysystems.com](http://www.duxburysystems.com)

Three of the improvements included in this update:

- **Save to MS Word:**  
Under Save As, and provided that you have a copy of Microsoft Word on your computer, you can now save a print file from DBT as a Word file.
- **TactileView Support:**  
DBT now integrates with TactileView tactile graphics software. TactileView is a full-featured tactile graphics program that can be operated by any user, blind or sighted.
- **Pre-UEB Braille Formatted File Importer:**  
This new braille file importer converts older raw braille files into UEB files (English language only, without math).

## Support Skills: Returning Students for 2016

For families planning to re-enrol their children for SSP in 2016. Please complete and return the:

- **Expression of Interest Form:** This information assists us to individualise a program that addresses your child's interests and educational needs. Download form from SVRC website.
- **Student/Family Satisfaction Survey:** provides you with an opportunity to report back to us on those aspects of the program you have found helpful and draw our attention to those which we could be improving on. We really do take your feedback seriously and while we can't always implement every suggestion we do take on board your comments.

## Lions International Essay Contest

Source: <http://members.lionsclubs.org/EN/serve/contests/essay-contest.php>

This essay contest was created to offer an opportunity to visually impaired young people to express their feelings of peace. The theme of the 2015-16 Lions International Essay Contest is "Share Peace." Students who are visually impaired and who are ages 11, 12 or 13 on November 15, are eligible to participate. One grand prize winner will receive an award and US\$5,000.

Each essay must be submitted with a completed entry form. Essays must be no longer than 500 words in length, submitted in English, type-written in black ink and double-spaced.

## Helping Young Children with VI to Become Strong Readers

Source: Leona Holloway, Australian Braille Authority Facebook page, September 2015

Kristie Smith notes that reading environment, use of real objects, and engaging the senses will assist young braille readers. Visit: <http://www.wonderbaby.org/articles/strong-braille-readers>.

### Students in the News

#### ***Blind Children find a Voice***

Source: Herald Sun, 25 September 2015

11-year-old Leah featured in an article published in the Herald Sun during the school holidays. Leah (shown left in the photo), who attends the SVRC Support Skills program, had a great time at the recent Guide Dogs Victoria camp. According to the article, the camp encouraged students to “build confidence using their voices in a range of settings and environments.”



Leah said, “It’s OK to ask for help ... We went out to the shops and had to interview people. We had to ask for things like a pair of Ugg boots and a slice of pizza.”

Students also “visited Kiis FM’s studios, caught a train, crossed a busy road, ordered dinner and went to a shopping centre.”

And a whole lot more, I’m sure! Good on you to the staff of GDV Children’s Mobility Services for another great camp!

### Supporting Braille in the Community!

We were pleased to be able to send out a collection of NAPLAN booklets for an activity day at a local school last term. Jacqui Saliba from the school writes:

Lower Plenty Primary School held its annual Mathematics Day in September. One of the activities was ‘codes’. The area the students were really curious about was braille.

The students looked at the braille system of raised dots and tried to make their own message in braille. We looked for patterns of the raised dots and talked about where we can find braille messages around our community. We also discussed how hard it was to read braille with your fingers.



Thank you to the Statewide Vision Resource Centre for their braille resources for the students to use. The students really enjoyed finding out about braille.

## Australian Blind Cricket Selection: Zac from Bendigo

From: Bendigo Advertiser, 5 October 2015,

[www.bendigoadvertiser.com.au/story/3395290/zac-seeks-ashes-revenge/](http://www.bendigoadvertiser.com.au/story/3395290/zac-seeks-ashes-revenge/)

It's the dream of every young Australian cricketer to one day wear the Baggy Green. For Bendigo teenager Zac that ambition has become a reality. The 18 year-old has won selection in the Australian blind cricket team to contest the 2016 Ashes Championship against England in Adelaide next year. Sheehan – a self-confessed cricket tragic – has his sights set on exacting revenge on the English after the Australian Test teams' failure on foreign soil earlier this year. He said he was rapt to be selected in the national team for the first time.



“Blind cricket is obviously different to normal cricket, so hopefully the town can get behind me and support the team,” he said. “It’s a good feeling to beat England - we’re definitely coming for them.”

The all-rounder’s selection is reward for his sparkling form last summer for his Melbourne-based club St Paul’s and his participation national selection training camps in Brisbane last week and in July. Sheehan said the four-team competition, which is based at the Victorian Blind Cricket Association’s headquarters at Kooyong, and also at Fawcner Park, was continuing to get stronger every year. The new season starts on October 10.

Sheehan has a highest domestic competition score of 32. Players in non-Test matches are required to retire at 40.

It has been a busy year on the cricket field for Sheehan. In January, he travelled to New Zealand as part of a Blind Cricket Australia development squad, which was unbeaten in six matches against the Kiwis. From December 27 to January 7 he will represent Victoria at the National Blind Cricket Championships.

While cricket will occupy much of time in the lead-up to the Ashes, Sheehan said there was something more pressing that needed attention before then, completing his VCE at Bendigo South Senior Secondary College.

“I have my exams in the next few months, so I am just trying to get through that first,” he said. “Then I can get stuck into the cricket. Hopefully I can get to play on the Adelaide Oval during the Ashes.”

The Ashes Championships will involve a series of three Twenty20s and five 40 overs per-side matches.

Sheehan is one of four Victorians in the squad and the sole country-based player.

## Braille Music Camp 2015

Hi my name is Caleb and now I shall tell you about the best Braille Music Camp in the world.

On the last week of school Term 2, about 10 to 15 students went to BMC including me. It was an awful long train ride of about 8 or 9 hours from Southern Cross to Mittagong. After we all safely arrived we walked into the BMC camp a music boarding school in Mittagong. We sat and had dinner which was ok. After that it was time for some settling time at BMC then we all went to bed. The next day it was all in routine this is our routine until Friday the best day of the camp. 8.00 am breakfast 9.00 am to practise our parts and 11.00 am braille music class. Then some free time, then dinner then settle down time and a Mini Concert, people were singing, dancing and performing for everyone.

On the last day it changed we got about 3 hours free time and it was so much fun. Then came the big night, the night where the entire choir had to sing in front of a great spectacular audience. The next day was the bad part saying goodbye to my friends that came from WA or Queensland. Then we caught the train back to Melbourne and said goodbye to all of my Melbourne friends.

I hope you get to go to BMC you will learn so much and you will take so much out of it. I am now able to read braille music. Thanks to BMC who really think about everyone. I can now also join in with my class and play and write notes for keyboard which is what I wanted to do. Thanks BMC.



Photograph (above) from the BMC Facebook page.

## And Other News...

- **Sarah Ellis** and **Rebecca McCristal** from Belmont High School have successfully completed the SVRC Braille Course by Correspondence. Zhi reports that their lessons were handed in regularly and were of a high standard. The assessment for both was completed the first time round! Congratulations ladies!

## Finally

Editor Deb Lewis would like to thank everyone for their contribution to this issue of The Bulletin, and in particular Maz Ferbrache, Annette Godfrey-Magee, Jordie Howell, Jill Keeffe, Lea Nagel, Garry Stinchcombe, Emily White and Lisa Zarb.